

(TMI Focus, Vol. XV, No. 2, Spring 1993)

## THE HUMAN-DOLPHIN BOND

by Madelyn Freeman

*The service coordinator of the Dolphin Energy Club finds the days enriched by many contacts with the DEC membership—letters, telephone calls, or face-to-face encounters. No fewer than eight participants at a recent LIFELINE® were DEC members! Several who took time to visit were concerned about imposing on dolphins during their healing work. The following essay by Madelyn Freeman, clinical psychotherapist at the Munro Clinic of Guy's Hospital, London, England, offers another perspective on human-dolphin interaction, intimating that this work may actually benefit all parties immensely.*

### **The Symbolic Dolphin**

Some time ago I was asked by Dr. Horace Dobbs to form a project with a view to investigating the more abstract elements existing in people's overall relationship to dolphins. This we did and, under the name of "The Human-Dolphin Bond Project," we requested details of dreams and extrasensory states of awareness in an attempt to segregate the common threads running through these experiences.

From the correspondence received, a "symbolic dolphin" surfaced from the seas of the collective unconscious. No doubt it gained some of its present-day propulsion from the fact that earlier incarnations of the dolphin were attributed both to the sun god, Apollo, who exemplified the spirit of prophecy, music, and healing, and to the goddess Aphrodite, who exemplified the feminine principles of love, sexuality, and beauty.

### **Tribal Teachings**

Yet, it is not only in the Greek histories that we find spiritual significance given to the dolphin. One of the more fascinating myths appears in early African tribal teachings, connecting the dolphin to the aquatic gods [who] came down to our solar system from the star system Sirius. This two- (or possibly three-) sun system accords with an ancient teaching of the esoteric tradition, which asks us to worship the "sun behind the sun." If we translate this into modern terminology, it might suggest that we look behind the obvious for true illumination. Perhaps these myths have preserved something previously known and understood by so-called primitive peoples, namely that our origins have included an aquatic phase. Sir Alistair Hardy, in his hypothesis on the aquatic ape, declared that somewhere in the predawn civilization we shared a semiaquatic past with the dolphins, which could, in part, account for the depth of instinctive emotional response people feel whenever the subject arises for discussion.

Looking at the dreams that people have written down and sent to the Project, it is clear that the dream dolphin appears to come into the lives of those individuals who are undergoing some form of emotional stress. As in classical times, the dolphin is still found officiating in dreams that express death—guiding the soul of the departed toward the next element of its journey. Dolphins clearly come to assist us, at least symbolically, toward a deeper understanding of our human dimension, thus helping us to cope with the demands of our consciousness. By reaching out to them are we in fact enlarging our own scope for self-guidance upon the mysterious depths of life?

It is not only in dreams, however, that we are struck by our need to understand. A symbol may be too abstract for some inquiring minds, but the dolphin still intrigues. Take, for example, the brain size of cetaceans, which has long puzzled science. Why has nature provided them with such sophisticated equipment if they are not intelligent or as conscious as man? The point of view of many is that cetaceans do, in fact, possess a high degree of intelligence, and their perceptual dimension is as yet undefined in our terms. Could it be that we will strike a chord of appreciation as we achieve a deeper understanding of our own perceptual capacities? Adhering to the principles of “know thyself,” these extrasensory states and dream images are good places to begin this uncharted search.

If we are to project satisfactorily onto the dolphin a vision of meaning and purpose for our individual lives, first we need to grasp more fully the meaning of consciousness. We are asking them in dreams to reveal themselves more fully, to guide us to a safer shore where we can exist together in harmonious productivity. We need to consider not only what can be done on a collective level to bring about this ecological balance but how we can live more balanced lives as individuals. We cannot escape these deeper messages from the dream dolphin.

## Fantasies

Unless we become aware of both the rational and non-rational elements of our thinking, we can never become “dolphin-like.” We can create splendid fantasies about whales and dolphins saving the world, but they will most probably end in disillusion unless we come to grips with ourselves. Dolphins are currently carrying this hopeful and powerful archetype for us; perhaps they are asking us to dive into the seas of our own unconscious to reemerge more like them. We would be doing them a reciprocal service if we did so. The Human-Dolphin Bond Project is still ongoing and welcomes views of any description—let us dare to explore our imaginative seas together, if we cannot reach the dolphins personally. I am sure they will not mind.